

**WANDERERS
MOVE UP
TO THIRD**

By STUART EARP Wycombe Wanderers 2, Hayes 1

ALREADY hit by several injuries to their defence, Wycombe Wanderers suffered another blow when Ray Eaton had to leave the field with a dislocated elbow on Tuesday night at Loakes Park. But the Blues then put all their troubles behind them in the second half to beat Hayes with a really hard working performance that brought them three points and moved them into third position in the Rothmans Isthmian League — a jump of four places.

With the scores level 1-1 at half time, things didn't look too good for Wycombe who had just completed a poor first half. But a fine goal by Mick Holfield set them up for victory and from then on the whole team gave 100 per cent. Derek Cotterill, thrown in at right back for Eaton after the break, scarcely missed one tackle and used the ball well when going forward.

But the man who really caught the imagination of the crowd was Geoff Anthony. The Welshman took his fair share of stick from the uncompromising Hayes defence during the match but suddenly pulled out a performance of true quality.

For Wanderers to beat Hayes — which incidentally completed the double this season — was no mean feat. The Middlesex club have lost only four matches prior to Tuesday despite their poor league position. They have drawn more games than any other side in the league — a total of eight matches — and are generally a difficult side to beat. Certainly Wanderers never find this particular match easy and their cause wasn't helped by the absence of John Delaney and John Maskell. Dave Bullock and Pete Spittle deputised while

Cotterill was named as sub. for the first time this season.

Hayes started with a vengeance after that 1-0 defeat at Church Road earlier this year, and kept Wanderers pinned inside their own half for the first five minutes. Then Wycombe hit back, with interest.

They took the lead in the fifth minute and for a few minutes afterwards, simply peppered the Hayes goal with shots from left, right and centre. Howard Kennedy, who looks to be approaching his form of last season, took advantage of a moment's hesitancy between veterans Kenny Kent and Bobby Hatt by taking the ball between them and then driving a neat

shot past Alan Cox and into the corner of the net.

SUDDEN BURST

Half a minute later, Dylan Evans was thwarted by the diving Cox and then Tony Horseman bent a clever shot towards the top of the net and watched the ball sail just wide. Mick Holfield completed this sudden burst of power with a fierce drive which flew over the crossbar.

The only trouble was, Wanderers seemed to have used up their total fire power in this one spell and for the rest of the half they petered out almost completely.

Hayes got on level terms after 17 minutes with a set piece move — Wycombe's

one major weakness in defence at the moment and one that Bedford will be hoping to exploit in next Saturday's FA Cup clash. Deward sent a free kick deep into the box and although Eaton got up well, the ball skidded off his head to Hatt who cut inside and planted the ball home from close range.

With Cox sending some massive goalkicks downfield, Wycombe were kept inside their own half. They were unable to take a grip of mid-field where Hayes were often first to the ball. Too many passes were played in the air where Hatt excelled and as a result, the Blues seldom troubled their opponents. Fortunately, Hayes had few

ideas in attack and they too seemed content in the main to pump balls downfield and hope for mistakes.

Terry Reardon tried to make an impact in the middle by quickening his pace and keeping a tighter rein on Burton but there was little excitement before the interval. Wycombe's cause was not helped when Eaton and Spittle collided going for a high ball, the left back dislocating his elbow. He was taken to Wycombe General Hospital immediately where the elbow was put back into joint.

Cotterill came out at right back for the second half with Paul Birdseye moving over and within five minutes, Wanderers regained the lead. Kennedy's corner was cleared to Mick Holfield on the edge of the box. Mick waited as the ball came down and then sent a glorious volley past Cox and in-off the upright. It must have been especially gratifying for Holfield, who struck the ball with his 'wrong' foot.

The game slumped again soon after the goal but Wycombe were beginning to gain the upper hand in midfield while Keith Mead and Bullock both did well in the centre of defence. Cotterill too, was thoroughly enjoying his outing at right back and gained much deserved applause from the crowd.

Then Anthony burst onto the scene. A couple of hard tackles seemed to bring out the best in him and from then on until the end of the game he became Hayes' major danger. There was one rather amusing moment in the 68th minute when Geoff was in possession with no less than five Hayes players coming across to take him — all at the same time. Anthony predictably lost that battle but broke through again a minute later on to Holfield's through ball. This time, none of the Hayes defenders could catch him but the final shot was rather weak and Cox saved comfortably.

At this stage Hayes were growing more and more physical. Both O'Sullivan and Deward were lectured by referee Smith and Deward was eventually replaced by Clapton after 76 minutes. Clapton brought a point blank save from Spittle in the closing stage but the Wycombe back four held the Hayes strikers at bay apart from that one incident.

Wanderers finished firmly in the driving seat with Kennedy twice going close before the final whistle. The first was a 25 yard free kick which he powered towards the net only to see Cox fling himself full length to punch the ball away and then Kennedy was again foiled by the 'keeper when he headed Birdseye's intelligently flighted cross at the far post.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle, P. Birdseye, D. Bullock, K. Mead, R. Eaton, (sub. D. Cotterill 45 mins); H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holfield, A. Horseman, D. Evans, G. Anthony.

HAYES: A. Cox; A. Carrington, J. O'Sullivan, R. Hatt, K. Kent; G. Lewis, F. Deward (sub. D. Clapton 76 mins), T. Burton; R. Ross, R. Butler, R. Wiles.

Referee: M. Smith (Hornchurch).
Half-time: 1-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Kennedy (5), Holfield (50). Hayes — Hatt (17).